perennius. Mélanges égyptologiques en l'honneur de Pascal Vernus (OLA 242), ISBN 978-90-429-3239-5.

ORIENTALIA LOVANIENSIA
ANALECTA
242

AERE PERENNIUS

Mélanges égyptologiques en l'honneur de Pascal Vernus

édités par

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PEETERS
LEUVEN – PARIS – BRISTOL, CT
2016

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

RECIPROCITY, RETRIBUTION AND FEUD

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Résumé. L'idéologie égyptienne présente l'ordre social, y compris le gouvernement de l'État, comme une structure hiérarchique de patronage. Dans une telle structure, la position sociale des individus est reflétée par des comportements réciproques entre personnes de rang supérieur et inférieur. Cet idéal est en contradiction avec des modèles d'identité personnelle qui mettent en avant la compétence individuelle, l'autonomie, la force physique et sociale. L'accès à toute forme d'aide — procédures juridiques incluses — dépendait en effet dans la pratique de l'intérêt qu'y prêtait un patron, seul capable d'agir ou d'exercer une forme d'autorité sociale. Cette conception contraste fortement avec la vision (moderne) d'une bureaucratie impersonnelle et équitable, et — comme le montrent explicitement les sources de la fin du Nouvel Empire et la littérature sapientale démotique — permet d'imaginer des cas où la violence et les vengeances personnelles étaient potentiellement normales. On soulignera que les querelles entre groupes (contrairement aux violences individuelles) ne sont pas évidemment décelables dans la documentation pharaonique, mais cela pourrait simplement découler de la nature trop peu conforme au décorum de tels comportements.

Abstract. Egyptian ideology presents social order, including government structure, as an hierarchical structure of patronage. Rank and individual status within patronage-loyalty structures were reflected in reciprocal behaviour between superior and inferior. This ideal clashes with models of personal identity, which focus on individual competence, self-reliance, physical and social toughness. Access to help — including court process — depended in practice on the interest of a patron, able himself to act or exercise social authority. The ideology of bureaucratic impersonality and fairness contrasts with the practical reality of individual social relationships, where personal enmity is mediated by group and patronage alliances. These themes become more explicit in late New Kingdom, but particularly in Demotic wisdom literature, giving advice about personal retaliation in the struggle for social justice. A picture can be hypothesised in which an expectation of violence and personal vendetta was normal: a presumptive constraint on local behaviour, mediated through exercise of patronage in mediation, reflecting a low penetration of impersonal government or of legal-

> bureaucratic functionality, although the image of such judicial authority represents the political ideology of high-level hierarchy. Structural inter-group feud, as opposed to specific individual violence, is not obviously detectable in pharaonic data, but this may simply reflect the deeply indecorous nature of such behaviour.

At the core of Egyptian social relationships lay the expectation of reciprocity. This is most clearly expressed in the ideology of reciprocal loyalty as the central premise of hierarchy. God, king and magnate fulfilled patronage roles within social and hierarchical structures, based on a patriarchal household model,[1] and this explicit norm of reciprocal balance underlies all categories of ideological text from Egypt: ritual, autobiographical and didactic. Religious cult was rooted in the principle that offerings made by man were inseparable from the return of care from god. When expressed directly in magical spells, threatening unresponsive gods with obstruction to and denial of their cult,[2] this extreme of reciprocity has seemed odd, even blasphemous, to other cultures. Praise and reward — *ḥsi*-gifts from the king — were the necessary return for successful performance of a royal mission; and all state duties counted as royal missions. A great man provided for and protected his subordinates, as they worked for him in return, in a framework that clearly identified social prominence with patronage for subordinates, including care for the socially weak.[3]

In this context, the standard ideology of the textual record does not so much mark a cultural ideal, but an essentially political decorum of hierarchical order, as normative to social relationships and class structures. It deliberately excludes non-hierarchical or anti-hierarchical behaviour, and so does not reflect the dynamics of relationships that are unpenetrated by government, or which stand outside hierarchical social

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[1] Cf. M. Lehner, "Fractal house of Pharaoh: Ancient Egypt as a complex adaptive system, a trial formulation", in T.A. Kohler & G.J. Gumerman (eds.), *Dynamics in Human and Primate Societies: agent-based modeling of social and spatial processes*, 2000, p. 275-353.

[2] R.K. Ritner, "Religion vs. magic. The evidence of the magical statue bases", in U. Luft (ed.), *The Intellectual Heritage of Egypt. Studies Kákosy*, 1992, p. 495-501, discussing magical spells where cure = cult : not cure = no cult, in the wider context of divine-human reciprocity in religion and magic.

[3] For recent discussion of specific examples cf. D. Franke, "Fürsorge und Patronat in der Ersten Zwischenzeit und im Mittleren Reich", *SAK* 34 (2006), p. 159-185; E. Oréal, "« Bienvenue ! » (*Ptahhotep*, Maxime 22). Répartition des biens et salut individuel", *RdÉ* 59 (2008), p. 335-356; J.P. Allen, "Old and new in the Middle Kingdom", in D.P. Silverman, W.K. Simpson & J. Wegner (eds.), *Archaism and Innovation: Studies in the culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt*, 2009, p. 263-275.

structures. So, for instance, the textual ideology consistently conflates the kinship-based expectation of inheritance of status — office and function — with the meritocratic assertion that appointments to office are made because the king has recognised the ability of the functionary. The ideology of individuality, so far as it is developed explicitly, is predicated on an ordered role within reciprocal structures, and not focused on what is individually distinctive about personal identity, nor on contexts for personal fulfillment. The ideology presents the positive and ordered side of reciprocal processes that characterise the functioning of social relationships.

The motifs of revenge, vendetta, legal self-help and feud, that provide the other side of the coin, were deeply indecorous, only appearing erratically in the ancient sources,[4] but they represent part of a package of issues that would seem central to social anthropologist among the natural stock of themes and questions to be tested in the description of a society.[5] Attitudes to physical self-help and quasi-legal violence form a central part of a society's self definition of how a proper man should behave,[6] which does not itself necessarily correspond to idealising visions of hierarchical order, and may indeed be in direct conflict with them.[7] It seems, then, worth a little effort to put forms of ideologically decorous self-presentation[8] into a broader context.

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[4] For a preliminary exploration of underlying issues see J. Baines, "Feuds or vengeance? Rhetoric and social forms", in E. Teeter & J.A. Larson (eds.), *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente* (*SAOC* 58), 1999, p. 11-20, attempting to contextualise a single passage in the inscription of Ankhtify (see below) claiming hierarchical mediation as a constraint on revenge for killing. More generally on issues of mediation contrasted with judicial imposition of order see C.J. Eyre, "Ordre et désordre dans la campagne égyptienne", in B. Menu (ed.), *Égypte pharaonique: pouvoirs, société* (= *Méditerranées* 6/7 [1996]), p. 179-193; C.J. Eyre, "Judgement to the satisfaction of all", in *La fonction de juger*: *Égypte ancienne et Mésopotamie* (= *Droit et Cultures* 47 [2004/1]), p. 91-107. Cf. also D.W. Hobson, "The impact of law on village life in Roman Egypt", in B. Halpern & D.W. Hobson (eds.), *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, 1993, p. 193-219 discussing the petitioning of officials by villagers, in practice seeking patron-like help rather than the application of specific laws.

[5] For a specific example see Jac. J. Janssen, "Gift-giving in Ancient Egypt as an economic feature", *JEA* 68 (1982), p. 253-258; Jac. J. Janssen, *Commodity Prices from the Ramessid Period*, 1975, p. 539-545, with review comments by B.J. Kemp, in *JEA* 65 (1979), p. 185-187. For a general survey see J. Lustig (ed.), *Anthropology and Egyptology: a developing dialogue* (*Monographs in Mediterranean Archaeology* 8), 1997.

[6] For a modern Egyptian context, cf. Sawsan el-Messiri, *Ibn al-Balad: A concept of Egyptian identity*, 1978.

[7] J. Black-Michaud, *Cohesive Force: Feud in the Mediterranean and the Middle East*, 1975 provides a broad comparative survey of relevant material, with a heavily structuralist approach. P.J. Stewart & A. Strathern, *Violence: Theory and ethnography*,

The Semna Stela of Sesostris III presents a clear statement of proper behaviour in this respect.[9] Although this is put into a context of a king, dealing with foreigners, where the role of king is by definition an aggressive and potentially violent protection against the foreigner, the underlying genre of this text and its mode of expression are clearly related to contemporary autobiography and wisdom literature. Sesostris is a king:

Ex. 1 K. Sethe, *Aegyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im Akademischen Unterricht*, 1928, no. 23, p. 83, l. 25-p. 84, l. 5
ʿḥʿ ḥr sf tm sfn n ḫrwy pḥ sw pḥw pḥ.tw=f gr gr.tw wšb mdt mi ḫprt im=s ḏr-ntt ir gr m-ḫt pḥ šsḫm-ib pw n ḫrwy ḳnit pw ȝd ḫsit pw ḥm-ḫt ḥm pw mȝʿ ȝrw ḥr tȝš=f
"who stands up for mercy, not merciful to the enemy who attacks him; who attacks when he is attacked; who is quiet when there is quiet; who answers a matter according to its content. As for he who is quiescent after attack, it is strengthening the resolve of an enemy. Aggression is to be *ḳni*; withdrawal is to be effete (*ḫsi*). He is a real she-man, the one who is driven from his border."

Where contemporary literature promotes the merit of being *gr*, 'silent', 'quiet', Sesostris presents that as a quality, excellent when it is reciprocal, but which in the wrong context defines somebody who is not a proper man: a *ḥm*, one who is really a sort of male woman.[10] The model son is then defined as one who fights for his father and his property:

2002, provide a more empirical approach. See also N.S. Hopkins & R. Saad (eds), *Upper Egypt: Identity and change*, 2004, p. 13-15.

[8] A.M. Gnirs, "Die ägyptische Autobiographie", in A. Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and forms* (*PdÄ* 10), 1996, p. 191-241; E. Frood, *Biographical Texts from Ramessid Egypt* (*Writings from the Ancient World* 26), 2007, p. 3-11, 28-29.

[9] See C.J. Eyre, "The Semna stelae: quotation, genre, and functions of literature", in S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim*, 1990, vol. I, p. 134-165; S.J. Seidlmayer, "Zu Fundort und Aufstellungskontext der grossen Semna-Stele Sesostris' III.", *SAK* 28 (2000), p. 233-242.

[10] The sense seems to me quite clear here. There is no doubt the element of a punning game, but a derivation from *ḥm*, 'turn back', 'retreat' (R.B. Parkinson, "'Homosexual' desire and Middle Kingdom literature", *JEA* 81 (1995), p. 66; M. Depauw, "Notes on transgressing gender boundaries in ancient Egypt", *ZÄS* 103 (2003), p. 50-51) seems to me much less likely.

Ex. 2 K. Sethe, *Aegyptische Lesestücke*, no. 23, p. 84, l. 13-14
sꜣ=i pw msi-tw=f n ḥm=i twt sꜣ nḏty it=f
"he is my son; he is born to me; the pattern of a son, vindicator of his father."

The son who does not fight for his father is rejected, and denied as a son.[11]

Ex. 3 K. Sethe, *Aegyptische Lesestücke*, no. 23, p. 84, l. 15-16
tmty=fy ꜥḥꜥ ḥr=f n sꜣ=i is n msi-tw=f is n=i
"he who will not fight over it, he is not my son; he was not born to me."

Although the theme is presented on a royal monument, the attitudes can be taken to reflect the normative expectations of behaviour from a proper man, rooted in family duty and solidarity.

A proper man should be *nḫt*;[12] a term that carries a full range of idiomatic meanings in the sense of 'hard'. The standard translation as 'victorious' is consequential to a physical sense of hardness, where a translation such as 'champion'[13] puts it also into a social and behavioural context. To be *nḫt* is the antithesis of being *sf*, where in both cases the positive or negative implications of 'hardness' or 'gentleness' depend on context. So the Eloquent Peasant says:[14]

Ex. 4 *Peas*., B1, 152-153
sf nb t
nḫt n ḫnr
twt ṯꜣwt n iwty-ḫt=f
"the Lord of Bread is gentle;
toughness belongs to the imprisoned-man(?);
to seize is characteristic of the one who does not have."

To be or not to be *sfn*[15] belongs to the proper behaviour of a person in authority, but requires reciprocity in the return of behaviour: the motif of the Semna Stela of answering another's behaviour according to its nature. So the early Eighteenth Dynasty Royal Herald and Mayor of This, Antef — an official deeply concerned with enforcement of royal control — describes himself as one:

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[11] The motif and phraseology of disinheriting an unsatisfactory son are the same as *Ptahhotep*, 206-217; see C.J. Eyre, in S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies Lichtheim* I, p. 155.

[12] R.B. Parkinson, "Boasting about hardness: Constructions of Middle Kingdom masculinity", in C. Graves-Brown (ed.), *Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt: 'Don your wig for a joyful hour'*, 2008, esp. p. 122-31.

[13] E.g., *Sinuhe*, B 93, 109; K*RI* V, 672, 7-8 (Sethnakhte stela).

[14] Cf. *Lebensmüde*, 107-108 for the same antithesis.

[15] It does not seem practical to draw any clear distinction in meaning or usage between *sf* and *sfn*.

Ex. 5 *Urk.* IV, 971, 5-7
mkḫ3 ḏdw grg
iri mnt n […] *s*(?)
tm sfn n šm-r
"who turns his back to the one who says falsehood,
who does harm to one who […] a man(?),
who is not soft to the indiscreet,"

and:

Ex. 6 *Urk.* IV, 970, 15-16
sfn n ḳb-srf
iri-wšb ḥr iri m sḫr=f
"who is soft to the one who controls (his) temper,
one who responds in relation to the manner in which somebody acts[16]."

Similarly the Eloquent Peasant, talking about the application of justice:

Ex. 7 *Peas*., B1, 180-183
in iw iwsw nmi=f
in iw mḫ3t ḥr rdit r gs
in iw rf ḎḥwtyDḥwty sfn=f
iḫ iri=k iyt
rdi=k tw <m>2-nw n 3 pn
ir sfn 3 ḫr=k sfn=k
m wšb nfrt m bint
"Do the scales tilt?
Does the balance give to one side?
Thoth – will he be soft?
Then you shall do wrong!
Make yourself a companion of these three.
If the three are soft, then you shall be soft.
(But) do not answer good with bad!"

The theme is found also referring to relationships of patronage and reciprocity within a kinship group:

Ex. 8 *Ptahhotep*, 318-320
m ꜥwn-ib r h3w=k
wr tw3 n sf3 (var. *sfn*) *r nḫt*
ꜥnd pw prr ḫr h3w=f
"Do not be covetous towards your own group!
Greater is the support for the gentle that the hard.
Diminished is the one who goes out from under his group."[17]

[16] I take a literal sense to be something like 'an answerer over one-who-acts-in-his-(own)-way'.
[17] Var. *ꜥnd pw pr ḥr ḫm h3w=f* "Diminished is a house, because of one who does not know his group."

Despite the awkwardness of translation, the sense is clear, that the retention of a client or family group (*hꜣw*) requires a patronage that is *sf*(*n*) to its members, not harsh or exploitative.

A proper man is *ḳni*, with its similar range of behavioural themes to those found with *nḫt*. The opposite quality of *ḫsi*, applied regularly to Nubians and other foreigners,[18] describes their core negative quality in a sense that seems to be essentially 'effete'. They are defined clearly in the Semna stela as not proper men, rather than suffering some other form of misfortune, wretchedness or general 'vile'-ness: they are the diametrical opposite to *nḫt* and *ḳni*, vicious and dangerous only in treacherous ways. So the Dialogue of Ipuwer characterises the success of *ḫsi* over *ḳni* as a reversal of proper order:

Ex. 9 *Ipuwer*, 7, 7
mṯn tꜣ ṯs.n=f m smꜣyt ḳni ḫsi ḥr nḥm [*ḫt*]*=f*
"Look, the land, it has organised (itself) in gangs; the *ḳni*-person, the *ḫsi* is seizing his [property]"

Similarly:

Ex. 10 *Ipuwer*, 2, 7-8[19]
niwt nb ḥr imi dr=n ḳnw mm=n
"Every town is (saying), 'Let us drive the *ḳnw*-people from among us'."

ḳni, like *iḳr*, defines the Egyptian citizen as a proper man. Both terms carry strong connotations of effectiveness and successful competence, self-reliance, responsibility, leadership by example; they are not neutral, abstract qualities of moral 'bravery' or 'excellence'.

At the core of the relationship between the living and the dead lies this normal expectation of reciprocity. The dead, as *ꜣḫ iḳr*, provides a return in protection and supernatural assistance for the cult — even if only cult recitation — given him by the living. The corollary is that insult will be returned in the same coin. There is a particular formula that appears on post Ramesside statues. Although uncertain in grammatical analysis, these statements are absolutely clear in meaning. The statue owner is explicit:[20]

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[18] S. Tyson Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic identities and boundaries in Egypt's Nubian empire*, 2003, p. 11-13.

[19] For the reading see R. Enmarch, *A World Upturned: Commentary and analysis of The Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All*, 2008, p. 77.

[20] See P. Vernus, "La rétribution des actions: à propos d'une maxime", *GM* 84 (1985), p. 71-80; P. Vernus, "Khâemwaset et la rétribution des actions", in L. Gabolde (ed.), *Hommages à Jean-Claude Goyon* (*BdE* 143), 2008, p. 409-415 for the theme of god as judge; on this passage see also R.K. Ritner, in U. Luft (ed.), *Studies Kákosy*, p. 495-501.

Ex. 11 Louvre N 2450 (= E 531), 5
ir nfr ir=f n=f nfr ir ḏw ir=f n=f mitt
"He who does good, he (the statute and its (dead) owner) does good to him; he who does bad, he does the same to him."

The preceding line on this particular statue base places the motif in the context of divine relationship with the world:

Rᶜ ḥr wbn ḥr gmḥ ḥr ḏbꜣ sp n ir sw
"Re shines, observing and repaying the action of the one who does it."

The curses characteristic of Old and Middle Kingdom tombs show, however, a rather schizophrenic attitude to the person who insults, either by 'impurity' (*ᶜbw*), by physical damage, or by theft from the tomb;[21] an attitude that contrasts with the relatively common deliberate damage to figures and names on these monuments as a form of personal attack and *damnatio memoriae*. One theme is direct physical revenge on the offender:

Ex. 12 *Urk.* I, 260, 16
iw(=*i*) *r iṯit ṯs=f mi ꜣpd iw*(=*i*) *r rdit snḏ ᶜnḫw nb tp tꜣ n ꜣḫw imyw imntt*
"I will wring his neck like a bird. I will cause all those living on earth to fear the *akhu* who are in the West."

The other is a proper legal process, even though it is a divine tribunal, evidently situated in the afterlife. So a different passage on the same door says:

Ex. 13 *Urk.* I, 260, 12-14
ir sᶜḥ nb sr nb rmṯ nb sšnt(*y*)=*f*(*y*) *inr nb ḏbt nb m is pn iw*(=*i*) *r wḏᶜ ḥnᶜ=f in nṯr ᶜꜣ*
"As for any noble, any magistrate, any person who will take down any stone, any brick from this tomb, I will have judgement with him by the Great God."

[21] In general see S. Morschauser, *Threat-formulae in Ancient Egypt: A study of the history, structure and use of threats and curses in Ancient Egypt*, 1991, and cf. K. Nordh, *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual background and transmission* (*Boreas* 26), 1996, p. 82-96.

In another example:

Ex. 14 Saqqara, Tomb of Hezi, left reveal, 1-2[22]
ir rmṯ nb ꜥḳt(y)=f(y) r ỉs pn wnm.n=f bwwt nt bwt ỉḫ nk.n=f ḥmwt ỉw wḏꜥ ḥnꜥ=f m ḏỉḏỉt nṯr ꜥỉ
"As for anybody who enters this tomb, when he has eaten the taboos of an *akh*'s disgust, when he has copulated with women, there is judgement with him in the tribunal of the Great God."

In practice, however, it is important to stress the general inaccessibility of legal retribution in pharaonic Egypt:[23] the absence of an institutionalised state judiciary, or a state court system of open access, but only the judicial functioning of a hierarchy, of government, and of local mediation processes in local councils. Enforcement required patronage.

Different genres of text are complementary. Each genre is incomplete in its coverage of social themes, and they are only partially overlapping in content. Autobiography has a focus on behaviour of the successful: leadership and responsibility after the event. Wisdom literature has a focus on order and strategies of behaviour for negotiation within a hierarchy, and with this an encouragement to sorts of passivity that target that internal order and its ideals. It excludes or condemns much ordinary behaviour that is disruptive or a negation of hierarchy, and emphasises particular ordered strategies for behaviour appropriate to specific contexts of social negotiation. In that sense, the ideals of the autobiography and the wisdom text are often complementary in their emphases.

The Maxims of Ani give exactly the opposite advice to the Semna Stela:

Ex. 15 pBoulaq 4, 21,14-16[24]
<m> sḫsḫ (r) pḥ pꜣ pḥ tw ỉmỉ sw n pꜣ nṯr wḫm=k sw m mnt n pꜣ nṯr ỉw dwꜣw mỉt pꜣ hrw ỉ.ỉri=k(?) ptr pꜣ ỉri pꜣ nṯr ỉw ḥtꜣ=f pꜣ ḥtꜣ tw
"<Do not> rush to attack the one who has attacked you. Leave him to god! You shall report him daily to god, tomorrow like today,

[22] See D.P. Silverman, "The threat formula and biographical text in the tomb of Hezi at Saqqara", *JARCE* 37 (2000), p. 1-13.

[23] Cf. S. Quirke, "Four titles: What is the difference?", in D.P. Silverman, W.K. Simpson & J. Wegner (eds.), *Archaism and Innovation: Studies in the culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt*, 2009, p. 311: that the category of 'judicial official' should be removed from the structural model. For the most recent survey of the functionality of law in Egypt see A. Philip-Stéphan, *Dire le droit en Égypte pharaonique. Contribution à l'étude des structures et mécanismes juridictionnels jusqu'au Nouvel Empire* (*Connaissance de l'Égypte Ancienne* 9), 2008.

[24] Cf. J.Fr. Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani: Ein neuägyptischer Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld* (*OBO* 141), 1994, p. 112-115, 180-181.

(until?) you see what god has done, when he has damaged the one who damaged you."

Ani discourages direct personal revenge, and looks for divine help, through prayer and petition. Amenemope looks to similar reliance on divine protection, as a contrast to human protection or mediation in case of serious personal offence:

Ex. 16 pBM EA 10474, chap. 21 (= l. 22, 1-18)[25]
m iri ḏd gmi n=i ḥry nḫt iw tȝ=i s m niwt=k m iri ḏd gmi n=i stȝ iw thȝ=i msḏw ḫr-r-ꜥ bw rḫ=k sḫr n nṯr tm=k ṯm ḏwȝ ḥmsi n=k r ꜥwy pȝ nṯr r[26] *pȝy=k gr ḥdb=w ir msḥ iw=f ḫꜥȝ ns*[27] *ḫr isy šft=f m iri šw ḫt=k n tȝ-tmm mtw=k ḫḏ pȝy=k nr m iri pḫr mdw=k n kȝwȝ mtw=k snsn n=k pri-ib ȝḫ s iw=f smi=f m ḫt=f r pȝ ḏd sw m ḥḏ bw iri.tw sḫsḫ r pḥ pȝ mnḫ bw iri.tw ḳmȝ r ḫḏ=f*
"Do not say, 'Find me a hard-man chief, for I have offended a man in your town!' Do not say, 'Find me a mediator(?), for I have offended a personal enemy!' For you do not know the intention of god, so you should not rue tomorrow. Settle yourself into the arms of god; your silence (*gr*) will prostrate them. The crocodile, who is deprived of a tongue, fear of him is ancient.[28] Do not empty your belly to the whole world, and consequently destroy your respect. Do not circulate your words to others, and consequently associate yourself with the man who bares his heart. More useful is a man who reports it in his belly, than the one who says it, damaging (with intent). One does not rush to attack (*pḥ*) the beneficent person. One does not move (oneself)[29] to destroy him.

The underlying theme, here, is the danger — and expectation — of making personal enemies, for which the only peaceful resolution is the direct intervention of a powerful chief as patron, or some form of mediation. The expectation is that obtaining resolution within the

[25] See V.P.-M. Laisney, *L'Enseignement d'Aménémopé* (*Studia Pohl: Series Maior* 19), 2007, p. 196-201; G. Posener, "Aménémopé, 22, 9-10 et l'infirmité du crocodile", in W. Helck (ed.), *Festschrift für Siegfried Schott zu seinem 70. Geburtstag am 20. August 1967*, 1968, p. 106-111.

[26] Grammatically the most plausible solution is to take this initial *r* as a writing of the 3rd future prefix normally written *iri*. Alternative would be as circumstantial *iw*, but interpretation as conjunction *r* 'in order that' would create an unexpected pattern.

[27] G. Posener suggests emending *nis* to *ns*; regardless of the accuracy of the emendation, and the problem of precise meaning of *ḫꜥȝ*, the general sense is clear. The crocodile does not make a lot of noise, but everybody is scared, respectful.

[28] The alternative translation of *is* as 'light' would produce a directly opposite sense.

[29] See V.P.-M. Laisney, *L'Enseignement d'Aménémopé*, p. 199, n. 1154 for treating this as a verb of movement of an aggressive sort, paralleling *sḫsḫ*, based on Coptic and comparison with pAnastasi I, 9, 5.

hierarchical structure will require patronage. That theme is developed in the Installation of the Vizier; the king tells the new appointee:[30]

Ex. 17 R.O. Faulkner, "The installation of the vizier", *JEA* 41 (1955), fig. 2, l. 9-12
[*s3*]*w ḏdt r ṯ3ty Ḫty ḏd pw sm3ir=f m rmṯt h3w=f n ktḫy m ḥryt ḏd r=f* (…) *m3=k rḫ.n=k mi ḫm.n=k tkn im=k mi w3* [*r=k*]
"[Bewa]re of what is said about the Vizier Khety; it is said that he did down people of his own group for the benefit of others, through fear that it would be said about him […] You should regard someone known to you the same as someone not known to you; a person close to you like someone distant [from you]."

This urging towards the impersonalisation of office, involving a separation of the functionary from ties and obligations of kinship, presents an idealisation of government. The passage from Amenemope is explicit in its contrast. To be in the right is there not presented as a defence, nor are state mechanisms of public order presented as effective. Avoidance of offence is primary. On the one hand, dignified behaviour can serve as a caution that interference with such a person is unpredictable in result, and potentially dangerous to the attacker, but also that the person whose public behaviour is restrained, not insulting or stirring trouble in what he says, but promoting social order, is anyway unlikely to be the subject of personal attack; but also, and ideally, making the enemy appear a fool causes him to defeat and diminish himself socially. Placed in the context of ordinary behaviour, the contrast here between *gr* and *pḥ*, in relation to *mdt* 'speech' or 'behavior', directly parallels that presented in the Semna Stela.

Amenemope and Ani stress the avoidance of personal offence and enmity, and when they do occur, they look for peaceful remedies for these through divine assistance. This evidently contrasts with real world expectations that violent reaction to offence should be taken as the initial norm, that necessarily precedes mediation. The appeal to god as support for a social quiescence under pressure seems to be more explicit in these New Kingdom formulations than was the case in earlier wisdom literature.[31] It is unclear whether this should be taken to reflect new emphases in the expression of personal reliance on god, or a contemporary political and social despair over the corruption and

[30] See also Stela UCL 14333, 5-6 = H. Goedicke, "A neglected wisdom text", *JEA* 48 (1962), p. 25-27.

[31] But see above on the appeal to god in curses, and note the Eloquent Peasant's final expectation of appeal to Anubis (*Peas.*, B1, 114-115); here reference to god is the final resort, envisaged after death. Contrast the name of the First Charioteer of His Majesty *Rʿ-ms-s*(*w*)*-m-s3-n3-pḥ-sw* 'Ramesses-is-after-those-who-attacked-him' (K*RI* III, 247).

ineffectiveness of hierarchy, or merely a broadening of the range of themes that were put into writing. These same themes are, however, developed more extensively in the Demotic instructions of Papyrus Insinger,[32] where the whole Twenty-fifth Instruction was explicitly 'to guard against retaliation (*tbȝ*)' for fear of suffering an attack (*pḥ*) in return;[33] and where quiescence is urged as the best mode of avoidance of violence:[34]

> "Do not desire to take revenge (*wḥm ḳbȝ*) on your master in order to seek justice.
> Do not approach (*ḫn*?) the strong man even when you have protection (*nḫt*) behind you.
> When a wise man is stripped, he gives his clothes and blesses."

The theme of acquiescence is explicitly repeated in the teachings of Ankhsheshonqi (8, 11):[35]

> "Do not go to court against your superior when you do not have protection (*nḫt.t*)"

Also, in pInsinger (29, 17-20):[36]

> "The fool who roams about loves neither peace nor him who brings it.
> The impious man does not like to be merciful (*nʿ*) to him who has done wrong to him,
> His eye is insatiable for blood in lawless crime,
> He who burns about an evil gets into crime through it."

While in the Instruction of Ankhsheshonqi (22, 21-25), insult is expected to produce violence in return:[37]

> "Do not insult a common man (ʿ*šȝ*).
> When insult occurs, beating occurs.
> When beating occurs, killing occurs,

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[32] F. Lexa, *Papyrus Insinger. Les enseignements moraux d'un scribe égyptien du premier siècle après J.-C.*, 1926. In the absence of a full modern or synoptic edition, translations here are quoted after the version of M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* III*: The Late Period*, 1980, p. 184-217.

[33] pInsinger, 33, 6-12.

[34] pInsinger, 27, 7-9.

[35] See M. Lichtheim, "Some corrections to my *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, I-III", *GM* 41 (1980), p. 72-3; M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* III, p. 266.

[36] Cf. also 27, 13; 30, 23; 33, 19.

[37] See J. Thissen, *Die Lehre des Anchscheschonqi*, 1984; translation here after M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* III, p. 176-177; cf. also Ankhsheshonqi 18, 7-8.

> Killing does not occur without the god knowing.
> Nothing occurs except what the god ordains."

The Twenty-second Instruction of Papyrus Insinger — "the teaching not to abandon the place in which you can live" — describes in detail the humiliations heaped on the stranger in a town, with no access to either impersonal justice or family support.[38]

Recourse to a court was not the first reaction of an Egyptian who had been injured; and was not recommended or encouraged as a course of action in the wisdom literature. A court, and appeal to hierarchical authority, was the recourse of the weak, not the hard man.[39] This motif runs, for instance, in literary form through the New Kingdom Story of Horus and Seth, in the repeated bouts of violence as the opinions of the society of the gods — the court — fail to achieve resolution.[40] Seth presents as the hard man, in all respects, asserting his right on the basis of might. Horus first presents the claim of the weak to right and good order, to respect for proper hierarchical structures and mediation. The resolution to that conflict only comes, however, through the threat of violence by Osiris, from the afterlife, and with Horus' own demonstration of adult strength. In literary narrative, however, it is impossible to distinguish between a normative expectation, an idealisation of fitting the punishment to the crime, or a purely literary motif in descriptions of the infliction of physical violence as repayment for crime: for instance, Horus decapitating his mother for siding with her brother rather than her son,[41] and Seth's blinding of Horus and abandoning him in the desert,[42] leaving him to wander in the wilderness, like Falsehood's Blinding of Truth, and leaving him for a lion in the wilderness.[43] These are cases of

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[38] See pInsinger 27, 22-29, 11.

[39] Compare the appeals presented in J.D. Ray, "The complaint of Herieu", *RdE* 29 (1977), p. 97-116 and G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9* (*ÄAT* 38), 1998, when local controllers of cult endowments violently (to the extent of threatening murder) repulsed attempts by individual representatives of central authority attempted to inspect, control or take over the endowment.

[40] S. Allam, "Legal Aspects in the 'Contendings of Horus and Seth' ", in A.B. Lloyd (ed.), *Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society in honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths* (*EES Occasional Publication* 8), p. 137-145. Cf. also S. Allam, "Justice seigneuriale (à travers le Conte de l'Oasien)", in *La fonction de juger*: *Égypte ancienne et Mésopotamie* (= *Droit et Cultures* 47 [2004/1]), p. 35-45.

[41] A.H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Stories* (*BAe* 1), 1932, p. 49, 12-16. [= *LES*].

[42] *LES* 50, 8-51, 1; cf. J. Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East*, 2007, p. 39-40 describing the shock of members of the French expedition to come across a blinded woman with infant, wandering virtually naked and dying in the countryside: an honour punishment.

[43] *LES* 30, 12-31, 4.

socially sanctioned (or socially disapproved) violence; not proper legal judgements, but individual retribution.

Nevertheless, the role of Horus as *nḏ it=f*, 'vindicator of his father', provides the structural norm. The translation of *nḏ* by 'avenge', 'vindicate', or 'protect' oversimplifies the constellation of meanings it would have carried for an Egyptian, but central to it is the social expectation of the potential for real violence. This is expressed clearly in the annual festival of Osiris, for instance, in Iikhernofret's description of his participation:

Ex. 18 K. Sethe, *Aegyptische Lesestücke*, no. 14, p. 71, l. 11-13 and 17-18
iw irı.n=i prt Wp-wꜣwt wḏꜣ=f r nḏ it=f ḫsf.n=i sbiw ḥr nšm(t) sḫr.n=i ḫftyw Wsir
"I did the Going Out of Wepwawet, when he travels to vindicate his father; I repulsed the rebels from the *Neshmet*-barque, and I felled the enemies of Osiris."
iw nḏ.n=i Wnn-nfr hrw pf n ʿḥꜣ ʿꜣ sḫr.n=i ḫftyw=f nb ḥr ṯsw Ndyt
"I protected Wenennefer on that day of great fighting; I felled all his enemies on the sandbank of Nedyt."

The underlying metaphor of this conflict is not only one of cosmic order and succession, but a narrative that reflects family vendetta, resolved by the mixture of might and right that cannot depend on an impersonal judicial system. This is the context in which Ankhtify, as restorer of order, claimed:[44]

Ex. 19 J. Vandier, *Mo'alla: La tombe d'Ankhtifi et la tombe de Sébekhotep* (*BdE* 18), 1950, p. 163-164, Inscription 2, I, β,1
iw di.n(=i) ḳni s ḥnʿ smꜣ it=f smꜣ sn=f n mryt grg(=i) Wṯst-Ḥr
"I caused a man to embrace with the killer of his father, of his brother, so that I could (re)establish the Edfu nome."

To reconcile the son with the killer of his father, or brother with brother's killer provides the extreme metaphor — and real political context — for the recreation of social order following extreme conflict of both political and personal nature. The curious expression *ḳni ḥnʿ* 'embrace with', rather than just 'embrace', might possibly be taken to describe a formal gesture of resolution after mediation, rather than simply serve as a general metaphor for reconciliation.

Egyptian texts provide no narrative for either the working of a personal honour code in social matters, or the working of feud. The wisdom literature does not give instruction to behave according to such a code, nor does it express concern about social shame as a motivation for violence. It is therefore possible to argue that the textual evidence, as

[44] See J. Baines, in E. Teeter & J.A. Larson (eds.), *Gold of Praise*, p. 13, line 4.

it stands, simply reflects ordinary human behaviour under stress, and not the working of structural patterns of behaviour characteristic of pharaonic society. So, for instance, the expectation that adultery will lead to violence from the offended husband need not be understood as more than the danger of provoking a crime of passion.[45] But in reality this deliberate reticence in the evidence should not be taken to imply that vendetta and feud were not features of Egyptian life. They are likely to have been cultural norms, but norms that were inappropriate to discuss in texts; things not made explicit, because the textual record is rooted in a class and hierarchical vision of order. The office-holding, patron class does its best to pass over the realities of kinship pressure, local identities, and the personal imperatives of the mass of the population insofar as these were disengaged from the ideology of hierarchy. Vendetta and feud are, by definition, a negation of the social and legal authority of government, and a denial of its penetration into society.

The weakness of a central law-giving authority, and of effective centrally controlled enforcement, will necessarily be paralleled by attitudes and strategies of self-help. In Eastern Mediterranean societies, and particularly sedentary village societies, family and group support have always been vital to survival. Traditions of history of feud and vendetta are only restrained where a political regime is strong enough, and penetrates thoroughly enough to enforce consistent and effective judicial systems.[46] Such penetration did not characterise the regime of pharaonic Egypt.[47] Feud, properly speaking, as a long-term structural and violent rivalry between different, typically kinship groups is not detectable in pharaonic Egypt. Larger kinship groups of the relevant sort are not themselves detectable in the evidence we have.[48] Our information about effective kinship ties in pharaonic Egypt comes at the low level, and it is unusual to find circumstantial detail of the importance of kinship relations and kinship obligations over more than a couple of generations. Egypt does, however, have a long history of violent inter-village conflict, of violent outbreaks between neighbouring settlements, which may themselves have an explicit kinship or ethnic identity. This

[45] C.J. Eyre, "Crime and adultery in ancient Egypt", *JEA* 70 (1984), p. 92-105, and cf. also J. Dieleman, "Fear of women? Representations of women in demotic wisdom texts", *SAK* 25 (1998), p. 7-46.

[46] See Black-Michaud, *Cohesive Force*; Stewart & Strathern, *Violence*, p. 108-111, 122-123.

[47] C.J. Eyre, in B. Menu (ed.), *Égypte pharaonique: déconcentration, cosmopolitisme* (= *Méditerranées* 24 [2000]), esp. p. 36-38 on local jurisdictions and suppression of banditry.

[48] D. Franke, *Altägyptische Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen im Mittleren Reich*, 1983.

sort of conflict may be projectable as structural feud, but it is not likely to be described with useful specific detail.

In contrast, direct personal violence as a reaction to insult and specific offence — immediate reaction, and short-term retribution, that does not necessarily convert into long term structural feud — can be seen as a norm in the data discussed here. There is a direct assumption that individuals will have personal enemies, and that relations with them are naturally violent, and must somehow be negotiated. The argument here is that the regular theme of the classic Wisdom literature, praising the 'silent man' — to be *gr* and behave *gr* in dispute — belongs at least as much to the hierarchical agenda of order and control, including the patronage of social behaviour in dispute through mediation and hierarchical enforcement, as it does to a social strategy for avoidance of conflict. To be silent, for both Ani[49] and Amenemope, means constraining a verbal or behavioural response (*wšb*) in the belly, restraining words that are in any way likely to be offensive, and so stressing the repeated motif that relationships depend reciprocally on the content of specific words and inter-actions. To Amenemope it is a tactic to be *gr*, not a moral imperative: the crocodile waits silently for his prey.

For most of the audience of the wisdom literature, to be *gr* is a definition of their hierarchical or social subordination, but also of their participation in that hierarchy. For the most part quiescence laid a person open to potential humiliation, for which there was little recourse: the behaviour of the village hard man or thug, such as the Ramesside foreman Paneb at Deir el Medina.[50] It is a cliché to note that the village council — the *ḳnbt* — at Deir el Medina seems to have been unable to enforce its opinions: a feature of negotiation and mediation in a culture of self-help and the need to be hard as an individual, and not a culture of effective government. The appeal to social quiescence presents an ideology of effective intervention — through patronage, hierarchy or from god — and not self-help; yet the use of the court is also rejected in the wisdom literature.

My argument here is that local patronage structures, and local pecking orders, were central to low level and practical social organisation in pharaonic Egypt. The penetration of the state, idealised as an impersonal patronage in the actions of officials, and impersonal appeal to their patronage to enforce perceived justice, was of limited and erratic effect. In practice one should envisage a cultural expectation that a

[49] pBoulaq 4, 20, 9-10; J.Fr. Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani*, p. 106-109, 173-174.

[50] P. Vernus, *Affaires et scandales sous les Ramsès: la crise des valeurs dans l'Égypte du Nouvel Empire*, 1993, p. 101-121.

proper man is hard, prepared to act or react violently to provocation and in self-help, defending his own and his family's interests. However, the powerlessness of the individual as individual is emphasised, against one more powerful than him, whether social or hierarchical superior, or whether simply a stronger, more violent, or better socially supported person. His need was for intervention from a man with power, to act, but appeal to officialdom was uncertain, dependant on the personality of that official, and within the parameters his own interest and its relationship to public opinion. The truly disinterested patron or functionary is not to be expected in such a context.